DECREE BOOK

DEGREE BOOK

OF THE

BRITISH AMERICAN

ORDER OF

Good Templars.

REVISED MDCCCLIX.

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1860.

CONFERRING THE DEGREES.

These Degrees are designed to be conferred by the Officers designated by the initials appended to the several Degrees. Or if the Worthy Grand Chief Templar or the Worthy Grand Counsellor, the Worthy Vice Grand Templar, or a District Deputy Grand Templar, or one appointed as special Deputy, or in case the Lodge has a Degree Master, such highest officer should take charge of the Lodge, and direct in conferring Degrees.

The design is that the degrees should be conferred by the one holding the highest Office in the Order, who may be present; but such Officers can take charge of the Lodge only by request of the C. T., except in conferring the Degrees, and should the highest Officer decline, then the duty will devolve on the next highest.

Presiding Officers should bear in mind that the Lodge should always be called up *when an obligation is to be administered*, whether it is so laid down in the work or not.

FIRST,

OR

DEGREE

OF

THE HEART.

DEGREE OF THE HEART.

[*The Marshal meets the candidate in the ante-room, takes him by the arm, and announces his presence by two distinct raps at the inner gate.*]

I. G. [*With a voice loud and distinct*] Who gives the alarm?

M. The Marshal, attended by a friend, who wishes to be inducted into the solemn Degree of the Heart.

I. G. [*Repeats the words of the M.*]

W. V. T. Admit them.

[*Inside Guard opens the gate, when they enter, and proceed to the chair of the W. C. T.*]

M. W. Chief, our friend has been duly elected, and now wishes to receive the instruction and honors of the Degree of the Heart.

W. C. T. My *friend*, you have lived long enough in this world to learn that man often deceives, and that man is often deceived.—

Those we trusted yesterday, disappoint us to-day. It is through such instability of purposes and changes of plan, that valuable interests, and truly noble enterprises, suffer.

Did mankind feel the solemnity of a promise —did *all* feel that, after a promise, the obligation to execute was imperative, and that these obligations could not be laid on and off at pleasure, but must run parallel with the circumstances which called for their being made, things would be different. Promises should claim the whole heart; and especially this should be so, when great and good ends are to be attained. This is the object of this Degree. By it we wish to reach your *heart*, and fix upon you a sense of your obligation to the cause of humanity, which shall attend you while you live. Are you prepared to take an obligation, and enter into covenant with us on this subject, with your *whole heart?*

Candidate answers—I am.

W. C. T. You will then proceed with the

Marshal to the chair of the Worthy Chaplain, and receive the obligation.

M. Worthy Chaplain, by the direction of the W. C. T., I present our friend for the obligation of the Degree of the Heart.

Chaplain. You will place yourself in the attitude in which you were initiated into this Order, and repeat after me the

OBLIGATION.

I, (*name,*) in the presence of these members of the Degree of the Heart, and in view of my obligations to this Order, and the love I bear my race, do most solemnly promise that I will never divulge anything pertaining to this Degree to any one, except in a lawful manner. And I further promise that I will discharge all the duties enjoined in this Degree, to the utmost of my ability, they containing nothing inconsistent with the allegiance which I owe

my country, or the duties which my religion may claim ; to the true and faithful performance of which I pledge my sacred honor.

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W. C. You will now repair with the Marshal to the chair of the W. V. T., where you will listen to the lecture which recounts the duties pertaining to the Degree of the Heart.

M. Worthy Vice Templar, by direction of our Worthy Chaplain, I present our friend for the lecture and further obligation pertaining to the Degree of the Heart.

W. V. T. Persons can advance in this Order only as they advance in knowledge and virtue. Accordingly, this Degree relates to *yourself*—to your own *heart*—from which, as from a fountain, all your actions rise. Hence its name, the Degree of the Heart. The heart should be cultivated. That which does not do this is valueless. This is the object of all Religion—this is the object of Revelation—and this is the object of divine government in our

world. Should we fail in this here, we should prove ourselves unworthy of your respect or confidence. *Fidelity* is a great virtue. Where the *heart* is right, this is easy; and where this is possessed, we can trust confidently and are happy, because we are secure. One great, I may say, the principal, object of this Order is, to promote the cause of Temperance in our world. To do this, we must be temperate ourselves —constantly and devotedly temperate. Many have lost sight of this; they have felt that they might put on, or lay off, their allegiance to this cause at pleasure. Hence its great instability in times past.

The object of this degree is, to secure your unwavering allegiance to this work. I have now explained the objects we have in view in conferring this Degree. Before we proceed further it will be necessary for you to take another obligation, in which you will be required to bind yourself in the most solemn manner to adhere to this cause, and to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beve-

rage. Are you prepared to take such an obligation?

Candidate. I am.

[*But, should the Candidate refuse thus to answer, he or she may be returned to the ante-room; such cannot proceed, not being sufficiently imbued with the spirit of our cause. But the Candidate answering satisfactorily, the V. T. will proceed with the Obligation.*]

OBLIGATION.

I, (*name,*) in the presence of the members of the Degree of the Heart, and in memory of all the evils which have fallen upon my race thro' the use of intoxicating liquors, do now, of my own free will and accord, and with a deliberate purpose to perform, most solemnly promise that I will not use or sell as a beverage anything that can intoxicate—under the penalty of being held as one unworthy of confidence—and that I will steadily observe this my pro-

mise, according to its true intent and meaning. To all of which I pledge my sacred honor.

Remember Ananias and Sapphira. They thought they were only promising to men, but the result proved that the Infinite and HOLY ONE heard their pledge, and He punished their falsehood. He has heard *your* solemn covenant, and he will hold you responsible for its fulfilment to the end of your mortal career.

Be *faithful*—be not *forgetful;* be *diligent*—be *persevering;* and so a good conscience and large success shall attend you.

M. Worthy Chief Templar, our friend, having complied with all our laws demand, now comes to you for the closing services of the Degree of the Heart.

W. C. T. This Degree has a Sign, Password and a Grip. The Sign is made thus—— and answered thus——

The Password is * * * *

The Marshal will now instruct you in the Grip.

C. T. You will now listen to what is said in Revelation of the offence against which we wish to guard you. This will show the strength of your obligation in a still more impressive manner. Listen to the words which came to Jeremiah, from the Lord, in the days of Josiah, King of Judah. Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and speak unto them, and bring them into the House of the Lord, into one of the chambers of the sons of Hanan. And I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine, and cups, and I said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine, for Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us saying, Ye shall DRINK NO WINE, *neither you nor your sons,*

FOREVER! Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab, the son of Rechab our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that the sons of Jonadab, the sons of Rechab, have performed the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people hath not hearkened unto me. But unto the Rechabites, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me forever.

You will see in this an example of fidelity

which is worthy of your imitation; and you will also learn that heaven visits integrity to this cause with peculiar honors.

We close this Degree by urging upon your attention the example of these wandering sons of the desert. Where they have been faithful thousands of ages, be ye faithful until *death*.

The emblematic color of this Degree is *Blue*. Its language is the same as that of the azure heavens, which throw their broad arch above and around us. As the eye never wearies in looking upon their mild and beautiful expanse, so the heart never tires in contemplating the results of true virtue. As, wherever we are, this beautiful arch is ever above us, the fairest emblem of strength, so we should be taught by it the firmness which should characterize true principle in whatever situation, or whatever country or society we may be placed. Wherever and in whatever you may see this color, be reminded of the obligations imposed upon you by this Degree.

Those present will form the circle, while the Chaplain offers a

PRAYER.

Almighty King and Ruler, smile upon and bless our *friend* and our mutual covenant.—Grant that each—that *all*, may be faithful and diligent, and that we and this cause may enjoy thy blessing forever. *Amen.*

SECOND,

OR

DEGREE

OF

CHARITY.

DEGREE OF CHARITY.

[*The Candidate being in the ante-room, the Marshal meets him, and announces his readiness to proceed, by* THREE *loud and distinct raps upon the gate. The Guard opens the wicket.*]

V. T.—with a loud, distinct voice,

Come!

[*The gate is thrown open, and, as the Marshal and Candidate enter, the Vice and Chief Templars repeat the following, the Marshal meanwhile conducting the Candidate slowly around the room.*

V. T. Thus are obstructions removed, and the way opened to all who are intent on benevolent designs—those who look for the good of our race.

C. T. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

V. T. Who is my neighbor?

C. T. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And, by chance, there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said to him, take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.

Which, now, of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor to him that fell among thieves?

V. T. He that showed mercy on him.

C. T. Then let us go and do likewise.

V. T. May we receive goods or service of our neighbor without a fair equivalent?

C. T. Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chamber by wrong; that useth his neighbor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.

V. T. May we give our neighbor that which is an injury to him, either as food or drink?

C. T. Wo unto him that giveth his neighbor drink; that putteth the bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on his shame.

V. T. May we speak evil of our neighbor?

C.T. "Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off," saith the Lord.

V. T. Ought we to respect our neighbor?

C. T. Yes, always, for a "hypocrite, with his mouth, destroyeth his neighbor," and "he that is void of wisdom despiseth his neighbor."

V. T. Is it proper to reveal the private matters of our Order? and have these any thing to do with our neighbor?

C. T. Most certainly, they have very much to do with our neighbor, and may not be revealed: for secrecy is the cement which binds together. The wise man says that "a tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."

V. T. Are there any further directions to be given to Good Templars respecting their duties to their neighbor?

C. T. Yes. "Thou shalt not raise a false report; put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment. Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause unjustly. Nor 'shalt thou wrest the judgment of the poor.'"

"If thou meet thine enemy's ox, or his ass, going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again." And "if thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him; thou shalt surely help him."

[*During this dialogue between the C. T. and V. T., the Marshal and Candidate are moving around the room slowly, and listening to the conversation. But here they will stand before the Vice Templar.*]

V. T. Such is a general view of the duties of this Degree. Are you willing to bind *your-*

self by a solemn obligation to observe and practice them, so far as it may be in your power to do so, and to aid others in the same?

Candidate. I am.

[*Should the Candidate refuse to consent to these duties, he may be permitted to retire; but in case he wishes to advance, the V. T. will administer the obligation.*]

V. T. You will then assume the Good Templar's attitude for taking the

OBLIGATION.

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I, [*name,*] most solemnly promise, declare and say,—that I will not reveal any of the matter pertaining to this Degree,—I will not write, indite,—or cause to be written or indited,—any

part of its lectures, signs, passwords, tokens or grips,—so that any part may be unlawfully or improperly obtained. I will only use and communicate what pertains to this degree—as directed by the work of this Order—and in no other way, nor for any other purpose. I further promise that I will remain faithful to my pledge, and that I will, by all lawful means,—try to lead all with whom I may associate—to be temperate and the friends of temperance.—And I solemnly promise to observe all the duties enjoined by this Degree, to the extent of my ability. To the true and faithful performance of all which I, in the most solemn manner, pledge my honor.

All present, in unison.—We witness your covenant.

V. T. You are now entitled to all the advantages which this Degree can confer. This is a privilege which you will esteem highly; but what you should prize beyond this is the privilege which it gives you of doing good to others.

We cannot live to ourselves; we are destined to influence others; we attract them involuntarily to the good or to the bad which we may choose. How much more powerful, then, will be our influence when we exert ourselves, and with the effort use the appliances for producing a beneficial influence which the Creator has furnished to our hand. The *Good Templar* is to do good *everywhere*, and to *all* men. You are to have no enemies. Men may *wrong* you, they may *traduce* you, but *you* must not be

their enemy. You must treat them, not *confidently*, but kindly. Do them favors, as enjoined in the lecture. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." You are to minister to affliction, to want, and wretchedness, wherever you find it, and can, whether in purple or in rags; in a cottage or in a palace. Your heart should ever be like the rock at Horeb, when touched by the magic rod of Moses—it should ever gush out with streams of refreshment to the weary, the thirsty, and the dying.

Mothers, daughters, sons, and fathers, have an interest here that is of incalculable importance, and each should employ all their influence to secure those interests.

The world is now before you. It is your field. Every intelligent being you meet has a claim upon you; each has an interest equal to your own. You are a steward. You must soon give an account. There is a time when the maker, the vender, the victim of intoxicating drinks, the widow, the orphan, the murderer and the murdered, the hosts of the ruined, with those who have wrought the ruin, by this means, and those who have influence, and they who wield the elective franchise, officers and constituents, will all stand before the Judge of men! *You and I* shall be there! and by these solemn truths—by the responsibilities growing out of our moral relations, and by the interminable destiny that there awaits us, I charge you to be faithful to your obligation and these great principles.

The Marshal will now conduct you to our Chief Templar, who will instruct you in the Password, Sign and Grip peculiar to this Degree.

C. T. This Degree has a Password, Sign, and Grip, by which you may know a Good Templar when you are appealed to for aid or sympathy, as a member of this Order.

The Password is * * * * * * *. The Sign is given in this form ———, and is answered ———. The Marshal will now instruct you in the Grip.

The emblematic color of this Degree, which you are now entitled to wear, is RED, or SCARLET. As, in light, the red rays are most intense and ardent, so the selection of this color for this Degree is designed to teach, that our *charities* should never degenerate to mere formal acts, but that they ought ever to be free and earnest, that the spirit which prompts them should be ever equally intense and ardent, that their object may feel, from our happiness in ministering to his wants, that we are rather receiving than conferring a favor. As red is conspicuous among all other colors, and is, also, primary among the original colors given by the prism, so, the *virtue of true charity* will ever form a conspicuous element in our character —an element, which, when possessed by us, will be seen and admired, but its abuse will surely be detected and lamented. When, therefore, you put it on, or see this color, remember your duty and your obligation.

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[*The whole Lodge rise, and all exclaim in concert*—]

Welcome!—Thrice Welcome!

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[*The Marshal conducts the Candidate to a seat.*

THIRD,

OR

DEGREE

OF THE

ROYAL VIRTUE.

DEGREE OF THE ROYAL VIRTUE.

[*The Candidate being admitted to the ante-room, is there joined by the Marshal, who will examine him in the initiatory Word and the former Degrees, and announce his presence to the V. Templar by four heavy raps upon the inner gate of the Temple.*]

I. G.—[*In a loud voice*]—There is an alarm at the inner gate of our Temple.

V. T.—You will attend to it with caution.

I. G.—Lifts the wicket, and with a full voice inquires]—

Who comes there?

M.—The Marshal, attended by a *friend*, who, having passed the outer and inner wards of our

Temple, now *wishes* to advance to a knowledge of our highest principles.

I. G.—*Has he* the words and signs which will secure *him* safety and protection on the journey?

M.—*He has*, and *has* entrusted them to me that he may advance.

[*I. G. throws open the gate suddenly*—]

Then let him come.

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The Lodge rise and exclaim together—

Welcome, *Stranger!*

C. T. Yes, Welcome; and remember that the door of truth always opens thus to those who knock in faith.

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C. T. Have you passed the initiatory ceremony, and taken the lower Degrees?

Candidate. I have.

C. T. Do you wish to advance?

Candidate. I do.

C. T. Can you give the initiatory word?

[*Candidate gives it as directed at initiation.*]

C. T. Give me the word of the first Degree.

[*Candidate gives that.*]

C. T. Give me the word and sign in the second Degree.

[*Candidate gives them.*]

C. T. Do you believe in the one Supreme and Almighty Ruler of the Universe; and do you fear him?

Candidate. I do.

C. T. Do you believe that all our acts are

done in his presence, and that he holds us responsible for all we do ?

Candidate. I so believe.

C. T. Do you believe that the Almighty is displeased with the awful crime of drunkenness and of drunkard-making, and that he would be pleased if they were banished from the earth ?

Candidate. I thus believe.

C. T. Do you believe that it is a duty which you owe to your Heavenly Father, as well as to men, to labor to drive this scourge away ?

Candidate. I so believe.

C. T. Will you enter into solemn covenant with us, to do all you lawfully can in this enterprize, as a duty which you owe to your Creator ?

Candidate. I will.

C. T. Then place yourself in the attitude

in which you were initiated into this Order, and repeat after me our solemn

COVENANT.

I [*name,*] most solemnly and sincerely covenant with these Good Templars, and before Him who has pronounced a solemn and awful curse upon the drunkard and the drunkard maker—that, as a solemn duty to Him, to my race and myself, I will not use as a beverage anything which can intoxicate, be it what it may, and I will use all lawful and moral means to banish the evil from the world, as a duty which I owe to my Maker. I also promise that the words, signs, grips, and all pertaining to this Degree, or either of the Degrees connected with this Order, or any part of its work, shall be by me kept as a sacred trust, and shall

never be revealed or divulged by me, only in a lawful manner, and as prescribed by the works of the Order. To all of which I pledge my sacred honor.

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C.T. In the first Degree you were instructed in your duty to yourself; in the second you were informed of what was due from you to your neighbor; and it now becomes my duty to impress upon your mind your solemn obligation to your Creator. This I am satisfied cannot be done more appropriately than in his own language.

"And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I am a

jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work. But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

Such are the duties which are taught and enjoined by this Degree. Respect and love to

that Infinite Being, the evidence of whose power and glory and goodness we see everywhere. The seasons, the flowers, the fruits and colors of the world around and above us, all tell his praise from their countless tongues, and urge us to rival them with our superior powers. From his greatness and goodness arises our obligation to him and to each other ; for if we have no respect or love for our brother whom we have seen, how can we respect our Creator whom we have not seen ?

I will now instruct you in the words and signs peculiar to this Degree, which has a Working sign and word ; also a Distress sign and word. The Working sign is made thus, ——— and is answered thus, ———. The word is * * *. The Distress Sign is given thus, ———. The word is ‡ ‡ ‡ ‡‡ ‡‡‡‡‡. The answer ‡ ‡ ‡ ‡ ‡.

These signs are not to be used common ; you are to employ them only in proving a member, and in case of real distress or necessity. The

words of the Distress sign are only to be used in the dark.

You have now passed through all the grades of our Order. The object in all these ceremonies has been to impress you with a due sense of the three great relations in this life, and the duties which are incident to them. I wish briefly to remind you of these.

First, they respect yourself. If we are not faithful to ourselves, how can we be expected to be faithful to others? A corrupt fountain cannot send forth pure streams. Unless we have the principle existing within, unless the duties we owe to others have in some form an existence in ourselves, they will never appear. Such is the relation of a correct moral character to a right moral influence. Our own minds must bear fruit before it can be imparted to others.

Secondly, we owe a duty to our neighbor. No one lives without some influence. A man may enclose himself in strong walls; he may

shut himself away from the light of heaven; and if it is known that he exists, he will have an influence; he cannot avoid it; it is something as inseparable from existence as breath is from life. The mere child, the tender babe, has its influence even upon the heart that has been moulded and set, and hardened by the tread of many years; why, then, should not our more active powers be influential? They are—it is unavoidable; and that influence will be broad and good almost in proportion as we will to make it.

Hence the connection of the two Degrees arises from the natural relation which they bear to each other. You cannot fail to see their fitness, and we hope that they may form a rich theme for your meditation and thought during all your life.

The emblematic color of this Degree is PURPLE. Its language is that of *royalty*. The selection of this color as appropriate to this Degree, was to indicate to you, that the virtue of which it was to designed to remind you is the chief of all virtues. Love is the fulfilling of

the law, and that love must first reach towards, and centre in, the Creator; then it will extend to the creature.

PURPLE has always been regarded as the appropriate color for those who were chief in place and in power; but how much more appropriate for those who keep the "Royal Law." This color will remind you of the high place which has been given you by this Order,—of the confidence of those around you in your integrity and virtue,—and above all, of the solemn obligation you are under to cultivate and maintain the high moral character which it teaches and enjoins. May it ever be your highest ambition to illustrate in your life the royal virtue—*Love to God.*

You are now fully entitled to all the privileges of our noble Order, and while we welcome you to its highest seat, may we be allowed to express the wish that your virtues may ever be a bright illustration of our principles, and the best commendation of our institution.